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Constance Cumbey's

NEW AGE MONITOR

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June, 1991

Dear Reader:

This is my second *Monitor* since I took the plunge back into this nasty fray. Many of you have sent me encouraging letters and I both appreciated and needed every one. I long kept silent on the ugly nature of the struggle to expose the New Age Movement. I long and jokingly said that if I were to write my memoirs about what "went down" in this battle that there would be a lot of people running for cover. In the interests of preventing confusion, I kept silence; but now in the interests of preventing confusion, it is time that I speak and I shall be doing so for the next several issues. We discussed Walter Martin and InterVarsity Christian Publishers in the last issue. I will be covering Bob Larson, *Christianity Today*, the Passantino's, Spiritual Counterfeits Project, James McKeever, Tim LaHaye and others in this and issues to come. It is sad but true to say that we got the word out on the New Age Movement no thanks to any of these people or institutions and in spite of and over their active opposition.

This issue I will cover my experiences with Bob Larson. We will also discuss on-line discrimination against Christians on the Sears owned Prodigy service. One of the problems in writing about the New Age Movement currently is that I haven't figured out how not to say "I told you so." The very trends that prompted me to write *Hidden Dangers* are now coming prominently to the forefront and it is impossible to ignore them. The Environmental Movement has increasingly become the vehicle for placing New Agers and New Age policies into power. New Age organizations such as Greenpeace and Amnesty International have become global powers with influence often exceeding that of the national governments they are fighting. It is now

common to drive down a freeway or city street and see many bumper stickers reading "Campaign for the Earth" -- Barbara Marx Hubbard's organization. Major newspapers such as our *Detroit Free Press* have columnists freely and openly mocking what they call "Fundamentalist Christians" (or more often now mockingly called Wildmonites), while praising New Agers and New Age theology as leading to enhanced creativity. Any word spoken against the New Age Movement is "censorship" while any word spoken against orthodox Jewish and Christian doctrines is "protecting the first amendment." Those coming against New Age meditational practices in the schools are "opposing innovative teachers" whereas in the modern/New Age scheme of things, they are "politically correct" or "PC" and have both a right and a moral duty to see that those not in agreement with their worldview are denied promotions, not published, not even hired in the first place!

I have found -- especially with my on-line experiences on the Prodigy networks that mockery of Christians and Christian doctrine is freely fostered -- even encouraged, whereas intelligent, articulate Christian apologetics are censored off the boards. Expect more of the same, but worse in the months and years to come. The Bible clearly prophesied that Satan went to make war on those who kept the faith of Jesus and the Commandments of God (Christians and Jews) and war traditionally has not been pretty. Jesus told us that this would be the greatest in the history of the world. Don't expect clemency from the devil or those strongly possessed by him -- *Mea culpa!* I almost forgot -- in this "New Age" we no longer believe there is a devil!

The Struggle to Expose the New Age Movement

I had this somewhat naive notion when I started my work that it would be "we vs. them." Somehow I thought that I would just have to get word to the Christian community and people I then respected within that community such as (believe it or not!) Pat Robertson, Bob Larson, Walter Martin, *Christianity Today*, *Moody Monthly*, Jack Van Impe, etc., etc. of the facts on the New Age Movement and they would immediately sound an alarm throughout the Christian community, mobilizing Christians to this clear and present danger which looked even more clear and present in 1981 and 1982 when the New Agers believed they were going to pull it off -- new "Christ" and all without any opposition from the Christian community. Benjamin Creme bragged to his packed audiences that it had gone too far and "nobody could stop us." Creme bragged at Detroit Unity Temple that by the time the orthodox Christian community caught on, they would be outraged, but there would be little or nothing they could do about it. On a Detroit WXYZ radio interview, he said that "they will bend their knees."

Needless to say, Benjamin Creme and many others in the New Age Movement were shocked when as Donald Keys put it, "a backlash developed and that books were being written about them -- there's that book 'The Dangers of the Rainbow'." While the Bible clearly prophesies that those with beliefs like the New Agers will have their day and will win important battles before God returns and we win the war. In fact, in both Daniel and Revelation it was clearly prophesied that "he made war against the saints of the most high and they were given into his hands for a time and times and half a time. This, of course, is the 42 months, 1,260 days, 3.5 years clearly prophesied for the period of the reign of the anti-Christ in the Bible. But this much the New Agers clearly forgot. As much as they may *think* to change times and laws, God is still clearly in charge and control of time and it won't happen a day before God is ready. God has never permitted action to

take place against his people without a prior warning. Certainly, God wouldn't let events of the magnitude of that prophesied for the last days take place without a warning. Daniel wrote that "those with insight among the people would give understanding to the many." Just as surely as it was prophesied that these events would take place, it was prophesied that God's people -- and the whole world for that matter -- would be forewarned and make a knowing choice. After that it was prophesied in II Thessalonians, Chapter 2 that God would send strong delusion and those who had not the love of the truth would be caused to believe a lie. This sending of "strong delusion" is not God lying -- for it is impossible for God to lie. Instead, it refers to what Paul warned the Romans of in Romans, Chapter 2 -- that there comes a time when the Spirit no longer strives with man and God gives men up to reprobate minds. It is not a step that the God who "is willing that none should perish, but that all should come to the knowledge of the truth" takes lightly.

I discovered the existence of the New Age Movement in Spring of 1981. By that time, I knew what it was called, and had confirmed that its "bottom line was the ushering in of a 'new Christ.'" I had clearly confirmed that they were seeking a New World Order, accompanied by some type of new world economic system, an enforced New World Religion, and the acceptance of a "New Messiah" for the "New Age." With many hours more of compulsive research, I learned that this was not the first time in the 20th century that a serious advance by those of this persuasion had been made. They had tried it before -- serious preparation starting around 1909 and culminating with an expected "Day of Declaration" in 1929 with a new so-called "Christ" known as Jiddu Krishnamurti. Many millions of dollars had gone into the venture then and governments including Costa Rica's had been toppled by the Theosophical followers of Krishnamurti's Order of the Star.

Given this history, and the Biblical warnings, I thought it only natural that given solid evidence, those in the Church with access to the media would take a fair look at the subject and help sound the alarms. A few did. But much more disturbingly, the greatest and the ugliest opposition came from within the Church. In fact, I learned in short order that I was the new enemy for bringing these facts forward. Some of this I revealed such as the threat I received from the senior editor of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. I have certainly documented the extensive opposition I received from Pat Robertson who now actually has the gall to raise money for his causes by saying that giving money to him will help retard the progress of the New Age Movement. There was some other serious -- and ugly -- opposition from those now attempting to simultaneously cash in on fears of the New Age Movement while simultaneously reshaping its perimeters so Christians will not believe it has invaded the Church and moreover that we have much common ground with New Agers on political issues.

One of those -- the earliest, the ugliest, and the most persistent -- was Bob Larson. His opposition was even more underhanded than Walter Martin's.

Bob Larson

As was the case with Walter Martin, I initially admired Bob Larson. I had his handbook on cults and kept it close to my desk while researching and writing *The Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow* throughout 1981 and 1982. I was taken back by his section on

The Church Universal and Triumphant of Elizabeth Clare Prophet. Her books and magazines were some of the more outrageous that I reviewed. They claimed channelings from "Lord Maitreya", the Virgin Mary, Buddha, Sanat Kumara, and a host of others that Elizabeth Clare Prophet claimed to be speaking for in her books with titles like *New Age Rosary*. Since starting radio interviews, I had been besieged with letters from frantic parents expressing concerns for their children caught in that cult and from ex-members telling me that "in some ways you have just scratched the surface of the horrors this groups plans to pull off. Cult watchers had provided me with ample evidence that this group was anything but benign and that Elizabeth Clare Prophet had made a royal living off those hypnotically subject to her through her system of high speed "decreeing" (chanting).

Elizabeth Clare Prophet -- Innocent but Misguided?

Bob Larson said many readers had written him to tell him that Elizabeth Clare Prophet was selling his books and tapes on rock music at her lectures. According to Bob in his *Handbook on Cults*, "This proves that Elizabeth Clare Prophet and her followers are sincere but misguided." Jacob Aranza introduced me to Bob Larson as Bob Larson came by Huntington House's booth at the Washington, D.C. Christian Booksellers' Convention (CBA) in July, 1983. My own book was newly released, but had much advance publicity. I shook hands with Bob who didn't have an exactly pleasant expression on his face. I told Bob I had enjoyed his *Handbook on Cults* and kept it handy on my desk. "There is one section, however, that when you revise the book, I wish you would consider changing," said I. "What's that?" asked Bob Larson. I then told him about my experiences with the Church Universal and Triumphant including an interesting call I had received from somebody purporting to represent them legally named Timothy Conners. "Bob," I said, "if there is one group out there that is documentably dangerous, it is Elizabeth Clare Prophet and her Church Universal and Triumphant." Bob flushed bright angrily red and boomed out "Can you prove that?" His pleasant lady producer tried to smooth things over by interjecting herself in the conversation and asking if I might be willing to do radio interviews for them in the future. I said I would and she said she would call me. I thought little more of the subject -- for one week, that is! My next stop was Missouri to speak to an outdoor camp meeting. I called my office in Detroit to take messages from my Phonemate. I played by long distance remote control a message from a San Diego woman informing me that Bob Larson had that day had Jeremy Rifkin as a guest on his radio show. According to her, a call-in asked Bob and Jeremy about the New Age Movement and Bob Larson said there was nothing to it. According to the caller, Bob then asked Jeremy Rifkin if there was anything to it and, predictably, Jeremy Rifkin (himself a world-class New Age leader) said "no." When the caller started to argue, Bob Larson cut him off by saying "remember you are talking to the author of a handbook on cults."

Bob Larson seeks Jeremy Rifkin's opinion on existence of New Age Movement!

I was incredulous. The ink was hardly dry on the May, 1983 *New Age Journal* where Jeremy Rifkin was interviewed by assistant editor, Rick Ingrassci, M.D. and asked Rifkin what he saw as the scenario for the future. Rifkin had replied that he saw the

New Age Movement, the Christian Environmentalist Movement and the Feminist Movement all joining forces and committing themselves to "the resacralization of nature."

"Surely you know enough about cults and the occult to know that means pantheism and animism" I wrote Bob Larson in a "please say it isn't so letter." I enclosed a thick packet of documentation on Rifkin's leadership role in the New Age Movement. Bob wrote back thanking me for the information and saying "why I'm very surprised, the subject of the New Age Movement never came up on that program."

Unfortunately for Bob, somebody sent me the tapes which were even funnier and more explicit than the first caller had indicated.

My next shadow encounter with Bob came when Mal Couch called me for a prescheduled radio interview with his Dallas/Fort Worth audience. During the interview, Mal stopped and said, "now I want you to be very candid with us -- have you had any problems with Bob Larson?" I answered, telling of our differences over Elizabeth Clare Prophet and the Jeremy Rifkin correspondence and subsequent disproving tapes. I told of the Jeremy Rifkin interview and my subsequent correspondence with Bob Larson, followed by the receipt of tapes from still another listener, proving the contrary of what Bob had said.

Mal then told all listeners why he had asked the question. The night before, said Mal, Bob had held a rally in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area. Mal Couch served as master of ceremonies. A local student of New Age Movement's influence on society posed a question to Bob about the New Age Movement. Mal said that to his and everybody else's surprise, Bob Larson turned bright red and angrily said "I'm sick and tired of people who see conspiracies under every bedpost. Nobody has proved to my satisfaction that there is a New Age Movement."

Shortly thereafter I travelled to Vancouver and friends played a tape for me by Tom Sine saying that he and Bob Larson had got together and both were extremely down on Constance Cumbey. I then spoke to a Vancouver Church in mid October, 1983 and was told that another of my main Vancouver engagements had been cancelled because Bob Larson had been there just before me and taken the minister aside and told him that if he brought me in, "it would split his church."

Two weeks later, I did a John Ankerburg interview where two of Walter Martin's associates, Gretchen Passantino and Chet Lackey pummeled me unmercifully. I arrived home and a few days later received a certified letter from Bob Larson accusing me of calling him a New Ager. I thought that in view of what I had learned Bob had done to me in Vancouver that was strange. He had slandered me, but accused me of saying something I had never said. I called Bob's office. His secretary said he was there and then came back to the phone somewhat apologetically and said he was in conference and would not be available at all that day. I told her to tell Bob that I had just transcribed his Jeremy Rifkin tapes and was prepared to read excerpts to a conference of cult experts where I was slated to speak a day or two later. (That conference was the infamous El Toro conference of December, 1983 and indeed I did read portions of those tapes to illustrate how Evangelicals were being deceived by New Agers.) Strangely enough, after this message was delivered to Bob, he called me within the next five minutes and talked for an hour! Bob insisted on praying with me over the phone, and I must confess that ever since that day, I have been somewhat suspicious of people wishing to pray with me on the phone -- especially people who have been observed in the act of recently cutting me elsewhere! I think it

may well be a case of "you spell it your way (pray) and I'll spell it mine (prey)."

The Radio "Invitation" that Wasn't

In January, 1984, I spoke to a conference sponsored by Mal Couch in Dallas. I did a live nationwide radio show with him on Sunday night. Several people called in asking "why did you refuse to go on the radio with Bob Larson?"

"Why he never asked me," I responded. "I would be delighted to do a radio interview with Bob Larson." The callers said that Bob Larson said live on his nationwide radio program that he had invited me on his program and I had refused to come on. Schemewhat taken back and embarrassed, I could only stammer "he never asked me, that's all I can say." One woman came forward to meet me after one of my seminars -- a personal friend of Mr. & Mrs. Mal Couch and she volunteered "I know why you are having so much trouble with Bob Larson." "Why do you think that is?" I asked. She said she had attended high school in another state with Bob Larson but that their paths had crossed again after school. She told me that after a disastrous teenage marriage that didn't last, she had been shunned by people at her church at a time she needed emotional support the most. "In my grief and despair I turned to the cults," she said. I asked her which ones -- she said she had floated through a number of them, including Hare Krishna. "Floating between the cults is one of the characteristics of participants in the New Age Movement," she said. She said that most New Agers were floating, trying to find the perfect "spiritual fix." Then she told me that her path and Bob Larson's path had crossed again -- "he was going through the cults too."

A week later I was in Washington attending the early 1984 National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) convention. Late one evening I was returning to my Shoreham Hotel room from the Sheraton tunnel in this vast hotel system. As I was approximately 100 feet down the hall, I recognized Bob Larson. I stopped him and said, "Bob." He appeared not to recognize me. "Constance Cumbey," I said. "Hi!" said Bob. He introduced me to Kathy his wife. I said "Bob, I'll come right to the point. I just came from Dallas and I heard from too many sources to ignore that you invited me on your radio program and I refused to come on. Bob, I'm very surprised. You have never invited me on your program."

"Maybe I didn't express myself properly, but remember the time you and I talked on the phone?"

"Yes," I replied.

"Well, maybe I didn't express myself properly, but my intention was to invite you on my program."

"Great, I accept!" I replied. Bob fairly stammered, "now Constance, you know it wouldn't work. You know you and I have our differences." "Great, let's discuss them on the air," I said. "It wouldn't work," said Bob.

I then said to Bob, "Bob, you have gone behind me about the country and tried to see that my speaking engagements were cancelled. Then you went to Vancouver and told the minister of a large church where I was scheduled that if I came in it would split his church, and as a result, that engagement, too, was cancelled. Then you went to TV 38 in Chicago, the country's largest Christian station, not knowing they had done a 3 hour special with me and had conducted their own independent investigation of the Movement. You told them there was no New Age Movement and they said to you, 'sit down Bob.' They showed you extensive documentation of the Movement and offered to show you their

videos which later won the Angel award. You refused to watch those because you 'didn't have time.' Bob for you to deny the existence of the New Age Movement in the face of this evidence is unconscionable! I then walked away. The whole conversation was low key.

I was about 50 feet down the hall when I heard Bob Larson loudly moan, "Constance, Constance. I turned to look, and he continued to moan loudly, "Constance, please don't throw a tantrum out here in the hall -- please don't make me have to report this." A man whom I didn't know had entered the hall, and Bob was evidently putting on a show for his benefit. I walked back to Bob and quietly said, "all right, Bob, if you want to play that way, I have access to the media too. And I'm working on my second book!" I didn't make that threat good and in the interest of preventing Christian confusion, told the story only to a few friends. In 1986 I was in Denver doing an in-studio radio interview with Peter Boyle of the top-rated secular Peter Boyle show of KDKA, Denver. Somebody called in and asked what I thought of Bob Larson. I told them that I had enjoyed his books, but had a few personal differences with him, unwilling to say more to a secular audience. A few minutes later, Bob Larson called in person, demanding "equal time" because he had been mentioned on the air. Peter Boyle gleefully said, "Put him on." Bob was abrasive and insulting. I finally said to him, "I still remember our last meeting, Bob." "So do I," said Bob Larson. Peter Boyle stepped in and said "what happened at that meeting." "Oh, Constance threw a tantrum" said Bob Larson. No, Bob, that's not what happened," I said and thereupon recounted the facts of the Washington Sheraton Hotel meeting I gave you earlier in this newsletter. I left the studios deeply chagrined that Christian dirty laundry had been publicly laundered in this manner. I thought the Denver Christians who sponsored me would feel likewise. Instead, they said they were "delighted" that I had aired my side of the story. "Bob has been telling that story here for years to his advantage," one woman said.

Now Bob has come out with his own book on the New Age Movement -- *Straight Talk on the New Age* -- a title in view of the circumstances and battles in this manner I find strangely insulting. I don't know if he was at the Gold Lake Ranch unity meeting "Christianity and the New Age" convened near the Denver metropolitan area (Boulder) in October 1987 by Evangelical Christians including Doug

Coe and Art Lindsley formerly of SCP and the CS Lewis Institute. Certainly he was in the right geographical area for the meeting for which the Denver Seminary appeared to be a focal point. Barbara Marx Hubbard chaired that meeting. I am told from my sources, at the invitation of Evangelicals! But, certainly the preface of his book contains the same line as the Gold Lake -- the good things about the New Age Movement and things on which we can agree with the New Agers. That list just happens to be the political agenda of the New Age Movement -- the agenda they *must* implement if they are to make their forced global spiritual change a reality." I am dismissed in that book as "perennial New Age antagonist Constance Cumby" with my name misspelled at that! Does Bob know what he is doing? I don't know. But certainly he was an extremely heavy obstacle to getting the word out at all on this subject. He denied it existed for as long as he comfortably could and when he could do that no longer, he attempted to make himself "the expert" and in the process either through ignorance or deliberately has endorsed a vital part of the New Agers' program. His book on the New Age Movement is better than some and certainly better than reading no book at all on the subject. But like Walter Martin, it is hard for me to take, knowing what I know about what went down. "For whatever motive they are preaching the gospel, still the gospel is being preached." Still, the endorsement Bob Larson in effect gave of their political agenda, gives clear indication that it is a highly diluted gospel, if gospel at all!

I have promised myself to limit newsletters to 4 pages, to avoid burnout and keep production costs somewhat normal, so I will have more next month -- much is happening that is of extreme significance in the New Age Movement, but I feel it vital that you have this background on the intense spiritual battles I underwent in the Christian community in getting word to you, if you are to even begin to understand the extreme subtleties and complexities of the Movement worldwide! This is a story I wish I didn't have to tell, but I now feel strongly led, although I didn't before, to tell it.

Sincerely,

Constance E. Cumbey
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